



Working for the people and communities of the 32nd District

Rep. Maralyn Chase

Letter to the 32nd District:

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Dear Friends,

I was very happy to hear back from so many of you who found my 2003 session overview to be a helpful guide through some of the issues affecting our neighborhoods.

This session I want to draw your attention to a new economic development initiative "BIO 21" — Washington State's Initiative in 21st Century Health. Bio 21 represents our state's future in the global economy. As the merger of computer science and the genome project, it also may be the leading edge in our economic recovery. Bio 21 is founded on imagination and innovation and suggests the possibility of merging public sector research results with private sector commercialization. The full report can be found on the web site of the Technology Alliance. I hope you will review the report and share your opinions with me.

We are moving the needs of our small community businesses to the front burner and are working on a proposal to reform the B & O tax. As this legislation moves along I will report to our four Chambers of Commerce on its progress. I also have a bill which I call Community Mitigation which requires small business and economic impact analysis as well as environmental impact statements for proposed projects.

It is important that we recognize and achieve the best possible climate for our businesses, especially the small ones that employ the overwhelming majority of our state's workers. I expect to see the same spirit of cooperation and creativity that helped us land the Boeing 7E7 project focus now on the other aspects of a healthy economy.

Last session we spent a great deal of time and energy working to improve our state's economy. Unfortunately, in order to spur economic growth, money that could have been spent on those most affected by our economic downturn — our children, our unemployed workers, and our seniors — lost out against a strong business lobbying effort. Cuts made to the Basic Health Plan meant that 20,000 families in need of health care lost it. Cuts in education funding meant we couldn't fully fund the voter-approved initiatives to reduce class sizes and give our teachers the pay they deserve. We weren't able to provide adequate funding for retraining programs that would help our state's unemployed get back to work.

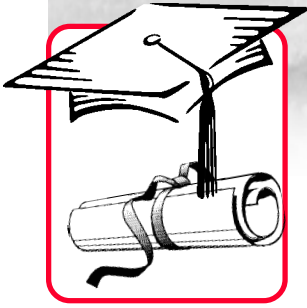
To fix the economy we need to address all of these issues, for they are all intertwined. We need to ask ourselves: What's the cost to children, working people and seniors if we don't address these needs? We can't expect a hungry, sick or neglected child to succeed in school and achieve a well-paid job. We can't expect unemployed workers to gain the skills needed to participate in Bio 21 without some assistance. And we can't expect to keep the cost of health care and insurance down if we deny some citizens appropriate preventative medicine.

I will be working hard during this session to make sure we give our children, our unemployed workers and our neediest families the attention they deserve. I intend to ensure that our biggest key to economic success — our state's hard-working families — are not left behind.

Sincerely,

Maralyn

Rep. Maralyn Chase



Protecting Students and Public Education

Basic Education

The state has not fulfilled its mandate to provide K-12 Basic Education, in large part because we have failed to provide stable and adequate funding. According to our state constitution "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all students..." (Article IX, Section 1) As legislators, we are responsible for providing adequate funding to keep acceptable student/staff ratios and attract and retain qualified teachers. Unfortunately, this means that some of basic education is being funded by school levy dollars instead. School levy money should be directed to locally determined needs and school enhancements, but that has not historically been the case. We must fully fund our schools to provide for the education of all children and to allow local levies to do local work.

Charter Schools

The debate about charter schools has raged for many years, and this legislative session is no different. I am opposed to charter schools for a number of reasons.

The implications of charter schools are that our teachers are not doing a good job and that the regulations imposed on our schools are too onerous. Proponents of charter schools say that they will help disadvantaged students in particular. However, we need look no further than the governor's proposed supplemental budget, which makes it clear that the state is looking to siphon off private school and home-schooled children instead.

Charter schools will have access to levy money, but the public will have no control over how that money is spent: the board of a charter school is not publicly elected. This will take more money from public schools and create resource-rich charter schools that cater to a select group of children. This is not a solution — alternative schools are already popular in areas that have the resources to support them. Our State is already underfunding education. We should not be creating a separate category of school to be treated specially. Instead, we must raise the bar for all schools and all children.



Heavy Metal Water Contamination in Schools

I am co-sponsoring a very important bill this year: HB 2569, which would require safe drinking water in Washington public schools. Students and teachers who learn and work in our schools need drinking water free from heavy metal contamination. This bill would require the Department of Health to set standards for school water, keep lead out of new school construction, and provide the means to enforce these standards.

Our public schools across the state are not required by state law to test their drinking water for contamination. State standards are based on the federal Safe Drinking Water Act, passed in 1974 to regulate the country's public drinking water supply. The act covers water suppliers such as Seattle Public Utilities but treats schools like private homes and other customers.

Water is safe when it enters our schools but it is unregulated as it travels schools' plumbing systems, raising the potential to pick up lead and copper on its way to faucets and drinking fountains. Lead solder and galvanized pipe are the major sources of lead contamination. Lead is known to affect intellectual development and to cause behavioral problems in children, but was widely used in drinking fountains until the late 1970s. An amendment to the Safe Drinking Water Act passed in the late 1980s recommended, but did not require, that schools test drinking water.

My bill requires all public schools to provide potable water, at all locations within their facilities, that meets both primary and secondary Washington State drinking water standards. This means that water provided to our children will not have heavy metals such as lead and cadmium and also, iron and other metals which color the water in many of our older schools.



Renewable Energy and Efficiency Standards

This year, I am sponsoring two bills that deal with renewable energy. One would provide incentives to small-scale producers of electricity with solar generation systems by creating a renewable energy

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incentive account that would compensate individuals to help defray the initial costs of installing solar panels. A higher reimbursement rate would be available for systems that were manufactured in Washington. The second renewable energy bill, HB 2445, provides incentives for manufacturers of solar energy systems to produce their products in Washington State. With flexible and innovative policies like these, I will continue to work for a green and sustainable Washington during this legislative session.

In addition, I fully support requiring electric utilities to use renewable energy sources and the establishment of incentives for increasing efficiency standards in the state. HB 2333 would advance the development of water, wind, solar, geothermal, gas, biomass, and tidal energy sources. Renewable energy is healthier for the environment and helps to wean us off of our dependence on oil. Our economy will be insulated against fluctuations in the price of oil, as well as spurred by the expansion of new technology to fulfill the requirements imposed by this bill. We currently rely heavily on hydropower for our sources of cheap electricity, but further diversification of energy sources will be beneficial to our environment and our economy.

Fircrest – Center of Excellence

I wrote to you in the last newsletter about Fircrest, our district Residential Habilitation Center. Having toured parts of Fircrest's campus in the past month I am even more convinced at the necessity of this institution. It provides safe and stable homes for a variety of developmentally disabled citizens.

Fircrest is also nurturing the Assistive Technology and Treatment Center. In 2002, the ATTC won the Governor's Award for Service and Quality Improvement. This collaborative program coordinates client service both for Fircrest residents and community clients in the following area: assistive technology, communication and physical therapy, nutritional assessment, dental services, and audiology. The staff is dedicated to providing quality comprehensive care to all the developmentally disabled clients who come to their center.

In short, Fircrest School is much, much more than a nursing home. It's a vibrant and exciting research center.

With regular, rigorous federal audits tied to its continued funding, Fircrest – unlike many community-based programs – meets the very highest requirements of patient care and has set the bar to which other care facilities aspire.

Additional Legislation

HB 2441: Creating a "Washington Made" Logo.

This bill would create a voluntary program for producers of Washington made products to put a single, standardized label on their product to mark it "home grown." The Legislature will invite school children around the state to submit their logo design to their local legislator who will forward it to the selection committee composed of State Legislators and the Governor. Both the winning logo artist and two runner-up artists will receive a scholarship. Much as the American Flag on a product provides additional information to consumers in their purchasing decisions, I hope this logo would make it easier for citizens of the state to support their local industries.

HB 2757: Community Mitigation. This bill requires small business and economic impact analysis as well as environmental impact statements for proposed projects.



Nursing Homes

We have a crisis brewing in our nursing homes. Massive under-funding has forced ten in the past year alone to close! No new homes have been licensed statewide since 1995. Last year, by taking a no-new-tax approach to our budget deficit, the Legislature cut funding further, and also added a bed tax on private

pay patients of \$6.50 per day to make up for part of the shortfall. Yet even that was not enough to close the gap for most nursing homes. I intend to make sure that the 2003 appropriation to the skilled nursing facility Medicaid payment program stays in the program — not to help balance the rest of the budget. We can no longer afford to ignore the plight of our elderly.

I welcome your comments and discussion on anything in this newsletter. Because of election year restrictions, I will only be able to send one more newsletter as a session wrap-up. But you can contact me directly at any time in Olympia:

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**Legislative Assistant:
Robin Ballard**

Ballard_ro@leg.wa.gov

**I will be continuing
Community Outreach Meetings
in district during session!**

6:30pm, second Thursday of every month,
in the district office:

Room E-600
Shoreline Conference Center
18560 1st Ave NE
Shoreline, WA 98155

Questions?

Call my legislative assistant,
Robin Ballard: 360-786-7880

Town Hall Meetings:

Please join Rep. Ruth Kagi and me to discuss the important issues being debated in the Legislature this session. I welcome your input.

Saturday Feb 21

10am-noon:

Third Place Books

(17171 Bothell Way N, Lake Forest Park)

1pm-3pm:

Shoreline Museum

(749 N. 175th St., Shoreline)

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